

Aftermath by TheCrazyFriend

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Language: English

Characters: Dustin Henderson, Eleven | Jane Hopper, Kali Prasad, Karen Wheeler, Lucas Sinclair, Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Mike Wheeler, Ted Wheeler, Will Byers

Relationships: Eleven | Jane Hopper & Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Eleven | Jane Hopper/Mike Wheeler, Kali Prasad & Nancy Wheeler, Will Byers/Mike Wheeler

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Summary:

The aftermath of Eleven's disappearance had been enough to leave Mike Wheeler and the others reeling. Worse was yet to come and while everyone was worried about Will Byers, nobody was worried about Mike Wheeler

1. Chapter 1

"Goodbye Mike" those two words were, in Mike Wheeler's opinion, the worst thing anyone had ever said to him, worse than Troy's favorite insult, 'frog face' and worse than any of the other things Troy or any of the bullies which included his dad had ever said to him. He was inevitably reminded of that dreadful night three months beforehand. The night he had lost the most perfect girl. He had been just about to ask her to be his girlfriend when the bad men came and interrupted their evening which had, in turn, led to the Demogorgon taking her with it, to the grave

"Don't say that to me!" Mike snapped, the torture and anguish visible in his eyes for the world to see, that was if the world had been looking for it. As it was neither of the people in the same room were even remotely aware that their son was incredibly distressed by those words as he has been every other time.

"Michael Wheeler! Don't speak to your mother like that!"

"What has gotten into you, Mike?" Karen questioned. The next few seconds were, to Mike it was almost as if a cartoon light bulb flashed into life above her head, "what's wrong? Are you still upset about the Russian girl?"

"Shut up mom!! Just shut up!" Mike wiped his eyes furiously, trying to control the hot tears that had built up and threatened to overflow.

"Mind your own damn business for once in your damn fucking life!!!" Mike had finally reached the end of his tether with his parents and their insensitive comments

Ted stood up angrily and advanced on his son. "Apologize" he hissed. "Sure. After she apologizes to me, I have asked a million times for her not to say those words!! I've told her to drop it a million times, to stop talking about her...!" Mike yelled. "I Don't know if she is a-fucking-live, where the fuck she would be if she was and even if I did know she was alive and where she was I wouldn't ever tell any of you traitorous assholes!! You assholes who would..."

Ted backhanded Mike across the face. Mike was so shocked by the action he didn't even cry out and Karen had already returned upstairs to settle Holly who had begun to fuss. "Stop, Michael." Ted growled, "Before I kick you out!" Ted hissed. "You've been nothing but trouble since that girl appeared. Now stay down here and think about what you've done! You can come out when you're ready to apologize to

your mom!!" He kicked the basement door, picked up Mike's walkie-talkie and left, locking the basement door behind him.

"Apologize to you assholes?!" Mike ranted in a whisper, now all alone in the basement. "You assholes who would willingly hand El over to that psychotic fuck to be abused for the rest of her life?! You assholes who betrayed Will and left him to die in that nightmarish place!?" Mike threw himself into El's blanket fort and nuzzled against the blankets. The blankets which still smelled faintly of her. He gently touched his cheek which was stinging from where his father had slapped him. He picked up his toy millennium falcon and sighed, sitting back in the fort, he couldn't hear his parents but he could imagine their discussion

"That boy!" Ted would exclaim

"Ted"

"He's been nothing but trouble, rude argumentative and disrespectful since Christmas" he would grumble

"Ted, he's a teenager"

"No. It started after that girl hid in our basement, the Russian one"

"Ted, I expect that girl died long ago. Nobody could survive out there for more than a few weeks, that's assuming that that Brenner guy didn't end up finding her and taking her back to whatever institution she came from"

Mike sighed. Sometimes he liked to think of Nancy interrupting their perfect little rant. He imagined she would say *"don't you two get it? Telling him the Russian girl is dead isn't helping, he's grieving!"*

Ted would, of course take badly to being reprimanded by his own daughter but Nancy knew Eleven wasn't Russian, or dangerous to Mike at least. In Mike's imagination, she would then come down and sit with him for awhile. He'd desperately try to hide his tears of course but he'd end up reluctantly breaking down in her arms while she soothed him

Mike was startled out of his imaginary scenario by the basement door unlocking then opening. He looked up, hoping to see Nancy but was visibly disappointed when Ted came into view. "Fuck off" Mike muttered

"You're grounded for two months" Ted declared coldly, without emotion. He then turned his back on Mike and began to walk away.

"You can sleep down here in the deceased Russian girl's den"

"Fuck you too" Mike replied just as coldly. He didn't see Ted's fist

coming at him and again was so startled at being hit he didn't yelp in pain, instead he dropped like a stone, the cold floor rushing up to meet him

2. Next morning

Mike groaned. He gently touched his chin where he had been punched and the back of his head which he had hit on his way down, the latter of which had rendered him unconscious. He tried to stand a few moments later but staggered and nearly collapsed again. He crawled to the bathroom in the basement and attempted to open the door. After a few failed attempts he managed to do so and he crawled what was left of the distance to the tub which he reached first. He promptly threw up and spat blood into the tub, grimacing at the awful taste of bile and the raw burning sensation in his throat from throwing up. He was groaning and holding his stomach when there was a light tapping noise from outside. "Will, what the fuck man? He's not in there he's probably locked himself in his room since he has gotten himself grounded"

"Seriously Dustin, something's not right" Will replied

"Why don't we just go talk to his parents, surely it wouldn't hurt to tell them it's important, would it?"

"Then what? You wanna explain why my mom refuses to let me go anywhere alone and why I've always gotta have a babysitter around?"

"... Shit"

"I appreciate you coming all the way out here, Dustin, I really do. What with Steve, Nancy and Jonathan off doing whatever they're doing this week..." He paused, Dustin's face was a smirk as he imagined what the three older teens /could/ be doing, however unlikely. "Dustin, NO!!" Will exclaimed quietly. Dustin chuckled quietly. "And mom working" Will finished lamely

"Yeah yeah, Byers. Jesus Christ, is Mike ever gonna open this fucking door?"

Mike groaned and crawled to the door slowly, every movement brought back the head-splitting pain he hadn't yet gotten used to. "Guess we could chuck something at his window to get his attention if..."

Mike panicked, *they're leaving!!* He thought. He dragged himself over to the door and knocked on it quietly, Will's quiet words drowned out by his splitting headache.

"Did you hear that?!"

"Will..." Dustin stopped talking. "Dot dot dot dot. Pause. Dot. Pause.

Dot dash dot dot. Pause. Dot dash dash dot."

"H. E. L. P." Will spelled out each letter after Dustin said each pause "Help?!" Both boys exclaimed, rushing back to the door to try and open it. They heard the front door slam and a car start up as Karen went to work for the day. Ted, the lazy bum he was still hadn't gotten out of the house.

"Do you feel ready to apologize, Michael?" A few minutes later, Will and Dustin heard Ted's voice which was greeted by silence from the boy in the basement. "I guess not" he turned, slammed the basement door, locked it and left the house, leaving Mike in his predicament, alone in the house and locked in the basement.

"Shit, we gotta get in there!" Will had exclaimed once he was sure Ted was out of earshot

"How?!" Dustin replied, having fully realized the potential severity of the situation when Will swore. "The house is locked up"

"Mike wouldn't be asking for help unless it was serious!!" Will was fretting about his first ever friend, his best friend

"Right. So how do we get in there?"

"Nancy?" Will suggested

"I suppose" Dustin's cheeks went slightly red

"Did she give you any indication where she was going?"

"Nope"

"Do you think we ought to call Hopper?"

"I don't know, hasn't he moved house?"

"Yeah I guess"

"I'm feeling a bit better now, boys, I... I just hit my head is all" Mike had finally been able to speak though he hadn't realized just how slurred it was

"Let us in, Wheeler" Will replied sternly

"Seriously boys I'm feeling better" he closed his eyes as the pain mounted once again, trying to resist the urge to groan, yell or hurl, or all three

"Fucking hell Mike, just open the fucking door will ya?!" Dustin wasn't impressed at Mike's refusal to accept help

"I can't. I'm locked down here, the key is upstairs" Mike groaned audibly regardless of his attempt not to. He then bent down and threw up where he led slumped against the wall, Will and Dustin hearing everything that happened

“Shit!!” Dustin ran to the next door neighbors house and hammered on the door

“Coming!” a voice echoed from inside the house and the woman who lived there opened the door. “Yes, Mr. Henderson, what is all the hammering about?”

“You have a spare key to the Wheeler's house don't you?”

“Yeah... why?”

“Because I left my hat in their basement and wanted to get it back”

The woman sighed, “fine. Go get your hat, but I'm counting the minutes you're gone, Mr. Henderson. If you were anyone else I'd refuse”

Dustin smiled and took the key, running back to the basement door. He took his hat back out of Will's bag and smirked mischievously at him, unlocking the door and returning to the next door neighbor's house to return the key. “Thank you, kind Miss, you've helped an old Bard on his most important quest yet!!”

“See you later Mr. Henderson...” the woman rolled her eyes and returned indoors

“SHIT!! MIKE!!” Dustin's peaceful few moments were shattered by Will's scream. He turned back to the house and sprinted back to the basement door

“Holy shit!! Fucking hell what the fuck happened?! You were right to be worried, Will. Fucking hell!! Mike!! Mike!! Wake the fuck up!!”

3. 10:05am

"What's all the fuss about?" Hopper had arrived at work at five after ten in the morning so was late, as usual, and had been met by Flo
"Ted Wheeler's kid has been rushed to hospital and Joyce Byers is waiting for you in your office"

"Ah shit. Mike or Nancy?"

"You know their names, Hop, I'm impressed"

"Just answer the question, Flo!"

"The boy, Michael"

Oh, fuck... "Very well, what's Mrs. Byers doing..."

"About time, Hop"

"Joyce, what's going on?"

"Will called me from the hospital, he was frantic"

Oh no...

"Will said he and Dustin found Mike, he was in his basement in a bad way. Will said Mike must've fallen or something but I'm not convinced"

"Right. What's Mike's condition?"

"You seem very worried about him, Hop"

She's always been able to see right through me... "Of course, he's a kid in my town therefore he's under my protection" *that and Eleven will have an aneurysm or murder whoever hit him*

"Riiiiiiight"

"For a moment I thought you meant *that* when you said Will called you from the hospital"

"Oh no, it's been a while since he had his last *you know what*" Joyce reassured him, "and I haven't seen or heard any seven or eight foot monsters stomping around town, not even *on the other side*" she added in a semi-teasing voice, waiting to see how Hopper would react

"Hush!!" Hopper warned. *IT'S A SECRET!!* The words remained unspoken, he wanted to get away from that particular subject as soon as possible

"Oh yeah" Joyce rolled her eyes, "anyway Mike was found in the basement of his house with a busted jaw and a fairly sizable injury to the back of his head. I'd guess he'd been punched but why would anyone do that?"

"That kid who came in claiming that his arm was broken by a psychotic child, could it have been him?"

"I don't know, Hop" she looked at him with exasperation, "and don't call Eleven psychotic"

"Right I'm going to arrest the boy"

"Hop you don't even know if it was him"

"What do you suggest? Huh?" Joyce shrugged so Hopper continued, "Speak to the Wheelers, Joyce, I'll go arrest the boy." *Better he gets arrested than what will happen to him if El finds out*

"Very well, Hop whatever you say" she eyed him suspiciously. "I'm going to check on Mike first, Will and Dustin found him in the basement in a right state"

"I'll have to get a statement" Hopper replied bluntly

"Hop!" Joyce had raised her voice in frustration, "the kid is in hospital!"

"Fine, fine" Hopper sighed and returned to the pile of paperwork, trying to find out where the Troy kid lived.

"Sweetheart!" Joyce moved over to hug Will who was sitting by Mike's bedside, holding his hand gently and had tears in his eyes

"M... mom" Will stuttered and broke down as soon as his mother's comforting arms were wrapped around him

"It's okay, sweetheart, I've got ya"

"He isn't waking, mom" Will whispered to his mom as his body wracked with sobs

"Mike is gonna be fine, Will" *he's gotta be*

"Promise, mom?" *How else would I know if you're lying to comfort me?*

"I Promise, sweetheart" Joyce knew how highly promises were regarded in Will's friendship group. She wanted nothing more than to be able to promise without a shadow of a doubt that Will's best friend would be okay, but she knew he must've had an incredibly serious head injury from the bandages wrapped around his head and the drain in the side of his head. *We can only hope, sweetheart*

"I love you, mom"

"I'm not the only person that you love in this room, am I, Will?"

"Mom? How... what?"

"How did I know?" Will nodded his head, "I've known for a long time sweetheart"

"And you're okay with it?"

"Of course!"

Will grasped Mike's hand and settled down in his mother's comforting arms to wait for Mike to wake, he didn't go to school that day as

Hopper and Joyce had reasoned that he wouldn't have been able to cope or learn while he knew his best friend was in the hospital.

4. Awakening

"Mom! Mom! Mike's awake!"

"Oh my god!" Joyce dropped her coffee and ran for Mike's hospital room. "Thank god for that!"

"Will? Will, what am I doing here? Where am I?"

"Mike!!" The first thing Joyce saw when she got to the room was Will clinging tightly on to Mike and Mike was reciprocating the gesture, albeit weakly and cautiously, not wanting a repeat of the skull-splitting pain he had felt when he had first tried to move after waking.

"Sweetheart" Joyce whispered, smiling

"Uh, Mrs. Byers? Where're my parents?"

"I can call them in a minute, and call me Joyce, Mike. You've known me long enough"

"Okay, Joyce. Can anyone tell me why I am in the hospital?"

"Me and Dustin found you in the basement. You were barely with it Mike, Dustin freaked after I fainted but he got the ambulance there in time"

"How did I end up in the basement?"

"We don't know" Will admitted.

"Sweetheart I need you to tell me who did this to you?"

"I don't know, Joyce, for all I know I could've fallen down the stairs, caught my head or something"

"Shit" Joyce mumbled the one word, she was so sure that the ugly mark spreading across the side of her son's love interest was that of a fist. She had seen it enough times on her own body

"When do you think I can go home, Joyce?"

"I don't know sweetheart"

"Ted, where's Mike?"

"I dunno do I?"

"Ugh!!" Karen moved away from the man sitting in his lay-z-boy, resisting the urge to hurl the carrot in her hand at his head. *You want something done, do it yourself!* She tossed the carrot back into the kitchen and yelled up the stairs, "Michael!!" to no answer

Nancy poked her head out of her room and went to see what her

mom wanted, "Mom?"

"Is Michael upstairs?"

Nancy didn't reply for a moment, "no? Besides isn't it a school day?"

"Yeah well I just got a strange feeling is all"

Oh fuck, "What do you mean, mom?" *Not again!!!*

"I don't know, I'll check the basement" Karen moved over to the basement door only to find it locked.

Nancy meanwhile had thundered down the stairs. "Mom tell me what's going on!!"

"Nancy? What's wrong?"

"Mike?" Nancy hammered on the basement door, not being able to open it without a key. "Shit! Mike if you're down there call up!!"

"Language!"

"Nancy, what has gotten into you?"

"Where's the damn key!?"

"Language!!"

Nancy glared at Ted as she passed him, opening the drawer where the key to the basement was kept. "Here it is, Mike I'm coming down!!" Nancy unlocked the basement and ran down the stairs, finding it deserted but the back door unlocked, "FUCK!!!"

"Mike, how do you feel?"

"Sick, Will. I can't even remember what happened before I woke up here"

"That's okay Mr. Wheeler, my name is Doctor Heston, I'm one of the neurological team here at Hawkins General" a man had joined them in the room

"A doctor?"

"Yeah"

"A bad man?"

"What?"

"No, Mike"

"Oh okay"

"I am going to ask you a few questions, starting with your name"

"Michael Wheeler"

"Good, do you know the name of the president?" Mike shook his head, "and what about the date?" Once again Mike shook his head.

"Very well, Mike here had a severe blow to the head resulting in temporary amnesia and a severe concussion"

"Shit" Joyce sat back, scared for her son's crush's life

"Where the hell is Mike!?" Nancy had run back up the stairs and back out to confront both Karen and Ted

"Nancy, why on earth are you acting like this?"

"Ugh!! I guess I gotta do it myself then!!" She ran off and fetched Mike's supercomm. She knew he hadn't gone to school because since The Demogorgon, The Party didn't go anywhere without their radios.

"Hello? This is Nancy, code red!"

"Nancy?" Lucas was the first to reply, "what's going on?"

"Mike's not here and he left his radio here at home"

"I haven't seen him, Dustin or Will all day"

"Shit!!"

"Nancy? What are you doing on the radio?"

"Looking for my little brother, Will"

"You'd better come to Hawkins General Hospital, you and Lucas"

"What the fuck?! I'm on my way!!"